



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 09/923,559      | 08/07/2001  | Maurice Karras       | 069558.0102         | 3036             |

7590

03/07/2003

Michael Locklar  
One Shell Plaza  
910 Louisiana  
Houston, TX 77002

EXAMINER

VANOY, TIMOTHY C

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1754

6

DATE MAILED: 03/07/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09-923,559

Applicant(s)

KARRAS et al.

Examiner

VANDY

Group Art Unit

1754

— The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet beneath the correspondence address —

## Period for Reply

OR THIRTY DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER,

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE ONE MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, such period shall, by default, expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ This action is **FINAL**.
- ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-117 is/are pending in the application.
- Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-117 are subject to restriction or election requirement

## Application Papers

- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to by the Examiner
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d)

- ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (a)-(d).
- ☐ All ☐ Some\* ☐ None of the:
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a))

\*Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment(s)

- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Reference(s) Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Office Action Summary

***Election/Restrictions***

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-26 and 115 (group I), drawn to a method for removing SO<sub>x</sub> from a gas, classified in class 423, subclass 243.06+.
- II. Claims 27-48 (group II), drawn to a scrubber, classified in class 422, subclass 168+.
- III. Claims 49-61, 92-114, 116 and 117 (group III), drawn to a method for making thiosulfate, classified in class 423, subclass 514+.
- IV. Claims 62-91 (group IV), drawn to a thiosulfate reactor system, classified in class 422, subclass 129+.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other, because each of the inventions set forth in the claims of each of groups I-IV are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because any selected group of claims is capable of supporting its own patent without requiring any of the other non-selected group of claims. The subcombination has separate utility such as the utilities described for each of the group of claims: for example, the utility of the claims of

Art Unit: 1754

group I is drawn to the removal of SO<sub>x</sub> out of a gas which is separate and distinct from the utility of the claims of group III, which is drawn to a process for making thiosulfate.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and the claims set forth in groups I-IV have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification; the search required for any selected group of claims is not required for any of the other non-selected groups of claims and the claims set forth in groups I-IV have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

The applicants are advised that in order for their reply to this requirement to be considered complete, it must include an election of the invention to be examined - even though this requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

The applicants are reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).


Art Unit: 1754

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy C. Vanoy whose telephone number is 703-308-2540. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 hr. days.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stanley Silverman, can be reached on 703-308-3837. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

Timothy Vanoy/tv  
March 5, 2003

  
Timothy Vanoy  
Patent Examiner

Art Unit 1754